

THIS IS THE BOOK BOSSES DON'T WANT YOU TO READ!

**WHO'S AFRAID OF THE
BIG, BAD BOSS?**



How to Survive 13 Types of
Dysfunctional, Disrespectful,
Dishonest Little Dictators

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Condensed Excerpt

CHAPTER 1: THE WANNABE

"Just give me the perks!"

How to Recognize a Wannabe Boss

Wannabe Bosses ignore people issues for the simple reason that they don't want to manage people. They don't know how and they don't want to learn; their job doesn't interest them. Wannabe Bosses may even boast about not doing these things with statements like:

- "My management style is to throw people into the fire and let them fend for themselves..."
- "I believe in the 'make-it-or-break-it' method..."
- "Sink or swim: that's the best way for people to learn..."
- "Throwing people into the fire helps them build character..."
- "If they want my help, they'll ask for it..."

"Sink or swim" and "trial by fire" and the other so-called "methods" that Wannabe Bosses use are nothing more than blatant refusals to accept their responsibility as managers of people. Managers are paid to minimize human error, not to increase its chance of occurring. But that's just what Wannabe Bosses do! Their negligence harms both the organization and its people; they cause employees to make mistakes, even when those mistakes create needless suffering and increase operational costs. But wasted time and money don't concern Wannabe Bosses—it's not their money!

Wannabe Bosses scorn people skills and call managers who apply those skills "wishy-washy"—their way of saying "weak" or "insignificant." This is just a cover for their lack of interest in studying human behavior and in developing the skills necessary to manage people in humanistic and effective ways.

Effective managers encourage and enable employees, and by doing so they have a greater impact on the organization than most individual contributors. Wannabe Bosses either can't understand this or don't want to understand it. A Wannabe Boss doesn't care about the

greater good that *could* be done by employees if he or she supported them appropriately.

Wannabe Bosses become department managers for the compensation, benefits, privileges, and status—not because they are interested in contributing to their organization or in guiding people. The only success they're interested in is their own.

Wannabe Boss Examples

The Indescribable Job (Example 2 of 3)

Sometimes Wannabe Bosses become so detached from their responsibilities that they either can't, or won't, describe their job. This became apparent to Nancy when she contracted to facilitate a working session for a group of middle managers who headed several marketing departments within the same international company. The departments had merged and the managers wanted to establish common goals.

After introductions, Nancy asked the managers: "What do you do during a typical work-week?" Wiley immediately shouted out: "We advertise! Haven't you been listening?!"

Nancy responded: "I understand the purpose of your department. What I'm asking you now is how *you* spend *your* time during a typical work day. What are some of the things you actually do while you are working?"

Wiley shouted even more loudly: "Look, do you ever see advertisements for our stuff? That's what we do; we advertise!"

"Who writes the actual advertisements?"

"We do!" he yelled.

"What are the names of the people who write the advertising text?"

"I don't know their names, they report to the managers in my department!"

"So, if I understand you correctly then, it's the specific job of some of the people in your department to write advertising text, but you don't actually write it yourself. Is that correct?"

Wiley snapped his response back:

"Look, we advertise. What else do you need to know?"

"If you don't actually write or implement the advertising yourself, then how is your performance measured when it comes time to assess your accomplishments and determine the amount of your annual salary increase and bonus? How is it determined whether you, personally, did a good or a bad job?"

At this point, the other managers "got it" and tried to explain to Wiley the difference between the tasks his employees performed and his oversight of that work. No one got through to him. He either could not, or would not, describe how he spent his time at work. No one else in that group explained their work either, even though they understood the question. They were either unable or unwilling to describe the specific activities they spent time on in their managerial role.

Strategies for Surviving a Wannabe Boss

To succeed with a Wannabe Boss, take steps toward being able to respond "True" to all of the statements in the Wannabe Boss Survival Quiz. For example:

- Work at becoming a highly competent professional in your field through formal study and practice supervised by teachers in advanced educational programs, mentors in your organization, or master-level professionals who will allow you to apprentice with them on the job.
- Obtain degrees and/or certifications where applicable.
- Read books and periodicals in your field regularly to learn about new trends in your field, and apply them in your work.
- Join professional associations that support your discipline. Read and contribute to their journals.
- Take initiative to do whatever is needed in your job and keep your Wannabe Boss informed of your progress through weekly or bi-weekly status reports. Don't wait or ask for direction or guidance.
- Learn the skills of negotiation and arbitration to manage conflict.
- Develop professional relationships with people in positions of authority who will keep you informed about changes in your company.
- Rely on intrinsic rewards for self-satisfaction such as self-acknowledgement for work that is well done or recognition from supportive co-workers and managers in other departments.
- Commit to a career at your current level—it is unlikely that a Wannabe Boss will promote you.

Basically, to be able to work well with a Wannabe Boss you must not need a boss at all. But you must take care to not become so independent that you disregard what your boss asks you to do.